

THE BEHAVIOUR KIT



A BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT RESOURCE FOR USE IN
MAINSTREAM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND
COMMUNITIES SCHOOLS

STUDENT SERVICES
SYDNEY REGION
2012

The Behaviour Kit



INTRODUCTION

This resource is a collection of general background information, policy documents, procedures, surveys, planning guidelines, program samples and templates, compiled from a variety of sources, for use in Whole School (Section One), Classroom (Section Two) or Individual (Section Three) behaviour assessment and management. Section Four contains Staff Support information.

The purpose is not to provide quick solutions to complex problems, but to offer suggestions and practical strategies with which to approach some common areas of concern in student behaviour and in whole school and classroom systems.

The specific content is listed on the first page of each section.

There are countless resources available on the internet, and you are encouraged to research topics regularly, and to engage in ongoing training and professional dialogue with colleagues and supervisors.

These pages are neither endorsed nor edited. Sources have been acknowledged where known.

The Behaviour Kit: Section One



WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- Student Discipline Policy
- Incident Response Plan
- Mentoring
- Attendance
- Exemption
- Bullying
- Playground
- Suspension
- Supported Return to School Program
- Whole School Survey Instruments
- DEC Policies relating to Student Welfare



STUDENT DISCIPLINE IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Support Materials





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Student Discipline in Government Schools Support Materials

<i>Introduction</i>	4
<i>The School Discipline Policy</i>	5
<i>The Planning Process</i>	6
Step 1: Form a school team.....	6
Step 2: Build field knowledge.....	7
Step 3: Gather and analyse information.....	8
Step 4: Prepare an action plan.....	11
Step 5: Inform and engage the school community.....	12
Step 6: Develop a ‘Statement of Purpose’	12
Step 7: Revise the current school discipline code (or school rules)...	13
Step 8: Revise the current school discipline policy’s strategies to promote positive student behaviour.....	14
Step 9: Revise the current school discipline policy’s strategies to recognise and reinforce student achievement.....	16
Step 10: Revise the current school discipline policy’s strategies to manage inappropriate student behaviour.....	17
Step 11: Define the responsibilities of staff, students and parents...	18
<i>In Conclusion</i>	18

Student Discipline in Government Schools

Introduction

The purpose of these support materials is to assist schools to revise their current school discipline policy and build on their current practice.

The need to revise the school discipline policy follows from the development of the new policy, *Student Discipline in Government Schools* and related *Core Rules in NSW Government Schools*. These documents replace *Good Discipline and Effective Learning – Ministerial Statement* (1995). In addition, *Respect and Responsibility: the NSW Government's plan for values, respect and behaviour in our schools* has implications for school policy and practice.

The Department of Education and Training is committed to a positive approach to student discipline. Practices that foster engagement in learning, set clear limits, recognise appropriate behaviour and apply consequences for inappropriate behaviour are more likely to promote positive student behaviour than punishment alone. This approach is assumed in *Student Discipline in Government Schools* and should be reflected in school discipline policies.

As schools evaluate their current school discipline policy, they should also consider other statewide reforms and changes in their own practices and circumstances. Recent initiatives that have implications for student discipline include *The School Uniform Policy*, *The Anti-bullying Plan for Schools*, *The School Attendance Policy*, *Suspension and Expulsion of Students – Procedures*, *Anti-Racism Policy* and Occupational Health and Safety procedures and support materials.

In evaluating the current policy, it is also important to be mindful of the [Disability Discrimination Act \(1992\)](#) and the Disability Standards for Education.

At a school level, school policy will need to reflect or respond to changes in the school community, emerging trends in student behaviour, teaching and learning or improvements in recent years to educational programs and practices.

While schools are expected to revise their policies to be consistent with *Student Discipline in Government Schools* and the *Core Rules in NSW Government Schools*, the process outlined in these support materials is optional.

Along with a suggested process for looking at current policy and practice, these support materials also contain hyperlinks to useful resources. Clicking on the hyperlinks will guide you to a website or allow you to download documents.

There is a range of regional support staff who can assist school communities, including school development officers, student welfare consultants, student support officers, quality teaching and curriculum consultants, multicultural/ESL consultants and itinerant support teachers.

For further information, please contact the Coordinator, Student Discipline on telephone 02 9561 8071.

The School Discipline Policy

The school discipline policy outlines how discipline is implemented in the school. It will inform and guide students, staff and parents* about the aims, underlying philosophy, expectations, strategies and responsibilities for student discipline.

A 'statement of purpose' should be included at the beginning of the policy. This statement should outline the aims of discipline in the school and the key beliefs or principles upon which the school's policy is based.

Additionally, the school discipline policy needs to include four key areas:

1. The discipline code (or school rules)
2. Strategies and practices to promote positive student behaviour, including specific strategies to maintain a climate of respect
3. Strategies and practices to recognise and reinforce student achievement
4. Strategies and practices to manage inappropriate student behaviour.

The [Core Rules in NSW Government Schools](#) need to be incorporated into each school's code.

The school discipline policy must:

- be consistent with legislation and reflect Government and Departmental policy
- reflect the identified needs of the community
- grow from existing policies and practices
- be developed within a student welfare context
- incorporate the principles of procedural fairness
- define the responsibilities of staff, students and parents.

Finally, it is essential that the school discipline policy is revised collaboratively so that it benefits from a wide range of input and generates understanding, ownership and commitment to its implementation.

* For the purpose of this document, the term 'parent' includes a guardian or other person having the custody or care of a child. (Education Act 1990).

The Planning Process

Step 1: Form a school team

The school team's role is to facilitate the revision process. The team should be led by the principal or their nominee and should be representative of the whole school community.

The principal remains responsible for the final decisions relating to the school discipline policy.

Focus questions:

- Who are the key stakeholders in our school community?
- What representation is appropriate for each stakeholder?
- What expertise is required to assist the team to successfully complete its task?
- How should the team members be selected?

Groups to consider include:

- Staff (eg executive, teachers, administrative officers)
- Specialist staff (eg school counsellor, support teacher learning assistance (STLA), student welfare coordinator, English as a second language (ESL) teacher, head teacher support, teachers' aides, itinerant support teachers)
- Community members (eg P&C, Aboriginal, Language Background Other than English (LBOTE) and other cultural groups)
- Students (eg SRC, school prefects, parliament)
- Committee members (eg Learning Support Team, Occupational Health and Safety)
- Other partners who work with students on school sites such as NSW Health, Department of Juvenile Justice and Department of Community Services.



Student Discipline in Government Schools

Step 2: Build field knowledge

It is important to develop a shared and sound understanding of student discipline and the revision process.

Regional staff, such as school development officers and student welfare consultants, have the expertise to advise and assist school teams. Regional staff may provide support through regional workshops. The team can refresh its understanding of student discipline through activities such as shared reading, guest speakers, conferences and school visits.

Suggestions and Resources

Books:

- Glasser, W. (1992). *The Quality School – Managing Students Without Coercion*. Harper Collins.
- Porter, L. (2000). *Student Behaviour: Theory and Practice for Teachers*. Allan and Unwin.
- Rogers, B. (1995). *Managing Behaviour – A whole-school approach*. Ashton Scholastic.
- Gossen, D. and Anderson, J. (1995). *Creating the Conditions: Leadership for Quality Schools*. New View Publications.

Websites:

[Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports \(PBIS\)](http://www.pbis.org/main.htm)

<http://www.pbis.org/main.htm>

Resources:

[The School Self-Evaluation Toolkit](#)

[Final word protocol](#)

[Building a Climate of Respect](#)

[Discipline and Students with Disabilities](#)

Step 3: Gather and analyse information

Gather information that will identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current school discipline policy and how it could be improved.

The team should collect and evaluate:

- Copies of the following documents:
 - *Student Discipline in Government Schools*
 - *Core Rules in NSW Government Schools*
 - *Values in NSW Public Schools*
 - *The Anti-bullying Plan for Schools*
 - *Anti-Racism Policy*
 - *The School Attendance Policy*
 - *School Uniform Policy*
 - *Suspension and Expulsion of School Students – Procedures*
 - *Student Welfare Policy*
 - Occupational Health and Safety legislation and regulations.
- Student discipline and welfare data (last three years, disaggregated by Year level; gender; Aboriginality and LBOTE):
 - Suspensions and expulsions (including reasons)
 - Attendance (including whole day and fractional truancy)
 - Classroom discipline referrals
 - Playground incidents - nature and number
 - Incident reports, complaints and discipline referrals involving racism and sex-based harassment
 - Detentions
 - Parent contacts (eg warning letters, interviews)
 - Referrals to the school Learning Support Team
 - Referrals (eg to regional staff such as HSLOs and itinerant support teachers).

Student Discipline in Government Schools

- Student learning outcomes (last three years, disaggregated by Year level; gender; Aboriginality and LBOTE):
 - Retention (Year 6-7, Year 10-11, Year 11-12)
 - Added value
 - Literacy and numeracy (eg Basic Skills, ELLA, SNAP)
 - Post-school destinations (for high schools)
 - Distribution of merit awards
 - Parent contacts (eg letters of commendation).
- Attitudinal data (through surveys eg Quality of School Life or focus groups, disaggregated by Year level; gender; Aboriginality and LBOTE):
 - Students
 - Parents
 - Staff.
- School community trends:
 - Enrolments (by last three years, disaggregated by Year level; gender; Aboriginality and LBOTE)
 - Enrolment of students with disabilities
 - Enrolment of refugees
 - Family data (trends over three years, disaggregating by family structures, employment)
 - Staff welfare.

Focus questions:

- What aspects of the current school discipline policy are not consistent with relevant Departmental policies and plans?
- Are all relevant mandatory Departmental policies reflected in the current school discipline policy?
- Which student welfare, student learning, attitudinal or school community trend data has significance and should be considered?

Suggestions and Resources

Policies:

[Policy table](#)

Websites:

[Occupational Health and Safety Directorate](#)

[Occupational Health and Safety – Student Behaviour](#)

[Mind Matters](#)

[Mind Matters Resources](#)

Surveys:

The Educational Measurement and School Accountability Directorate (EMSAD) website has a number of survey instruments that may be useful. These can be accessed from the links below:

[Quality of School Life Survey \(QSL\)](#)

[School Map Surveys](#)

[Culture](#)

[Planning](#)

[Learning](#)

[Leadership](#)

[Management](#)

Other Surveys:

[Student Discipline - Staff Survey](#)

[Student Discipline - Student Survey](#)

Workshops:

[Identifying and Prioritising Issues](#)

Focus group:

[Guidelines for Developing and Facilitating Focus Groups](#)

Student Discipline in Government Schools

Step 4: Prepare an action plan

The school team should draft an action plan.

Focus questions:

- What needs to be done to revise the school discipline policy?
- How will each of these actions be achieved?
- When will each be done?
- Who is responsible for completing each action?

Suggestions and Resources

Policy:

[Values in NSW Public Schools](#)

Step 5: Inform and engage the school community

The school team needs to consult with the school community about its draft action plan.

The team should present the data it has selected to the school community for consideration and have participants respond to prepared questions.

Focus questions:

- How will community members be consulted?
- To which members of the school community should the various data be presented? Consider sensitivity and privacy issues related to some data.
- How can this data be effectively presented so its significance can most readily be recognised?
- What questions should be asked to facilitate understanding and generate ideas?
- What are the perceived causes of concerns identified by the data?
- What is the school's capacity to address these issues?

Step 6: Develop a 'Statement of Purpose'

A 'statement of purpose' should be included at the beginning of the policy. This statement outlines the aims of discipline in the school and the key beliefs or principles upon which the policy is based.

Focus questions:

- What principles should underpin the school's discipline practices?
- What outcomes does the community want the school discipline policy to achieve?
- Are the policies, programs and practices within the school likely to achieve these outcomes?

Student Discipline in Government Schools

Step 7: Revise the current school discipline code (or school rules)

The school discipline policy needs to articulate a discipline code (or school rules) consistent with the [Core Rules in NSW Government Schools](#) and the needs of the school community.

Given the diversity of school communities, schools have flexibility to refine and add to these rules to suit their local circumstances. This flexibility includes the opportunity to reframe the wording of the rules to suit the community's preferences (eg using a rights and responsibilities framework), as long as the substance of the core rules is identifiable.

Focus questions:

- Do any of the core rules need to be refined to suit this school community? If so, which, why and how?
- Are there any rules that need to be added?
- How should the school's discipline code be communicated to students, parents and staff?
- Into which community languages does the discipline code (or school rules) need to be translated?

Suggestions and Resources

Documents

[Core Rules in NSW Government Schools](#)

[Rules for rules](#)

Website:

[Interpreter and Translation Services](#)

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/adminsupport/intertranslate.php>

Step 8: Revise the current school discipline policy's strategies to promote positive student behaviour

The school discipline policy must outline the major strategies used by the school to foster positive behaviour. These should be at the heart of teaching and learning programs and practices, provide opportunities for enrichment and leadership and support the needs of individual students. Strategies need to be revised so they remain relevant and reflect recent improvements in school programs and practices.

Focus questions:

- Which strategies identified in the current policy remain a vital part of the school's programs and practices? Which are no longer relevant?
- Are the strategies applied consistently across the school?
- What improvements has the school introduced in recent years that have enhanced student behaviour and learning?
- Do these strategies enhance student behaviour and learning? Do students think so?
- Taking into account the policy revision and the analysis of school data, are these strategies sufficient?
- How can the dimensions of the NSW Quality Teaching model support the school discipline policy's strategies?
- What other strategies should the school consider to further promote positive behaviour?
- Do the strategies and practices support and reflect the aims and beliefs articulated in the 'statement of purpose'?

Suggestions and Resources

Website:

[Quality Teaching in NSW Public Schools](#)

[Knowing Makes the Difference: Learnings from the NSW PAS Program](#)

Resource:

Social Responsibility Years K - 6 (NSW DET 2002)

Social Responsibility Years 7 - 12 (NSW DET 2002)

[Resources for Teaching Respect and Responsibility](#)

Suggestions:

[Promoting Positive Student Behaviour – Some Suggestions](#)



Step 9: Revise the current school discipline policy's strategies to recognise and reinforce student achievement

The school discipline policy must outline the major strategies that the school implements to recognise and reinforce student achievement.

Focus questions:

- Which strategies identified in the current policy remain a vital part of the school's practices? Which are no longer significant?
- Are the strategies implemented consistently across the school?
- What improvements has the school introduced in recent years that have enhanced the recognition and reinforcement of student achievement?
- Do students find these strategies recognise and reinforce their achievement?
- Taking into account the policy revision and the analysis of school data, are these strategies sufficient?
- What other strategies should the school consider to further recognise student achievement?
- Do the strategies and practices support and reflect the aims and beliefs articulated in the 'statement of purpose'?

Suggestions and Resources

[Recognising and Reinforcing Student Achievement – Some Suggestions](#)

Surveys:

[Recognising and Reinforcing Student Achievement - Staff Survey](#)

[Recognising and Reinforcing Student Achievement - Student Survey](#)

Student Discipline in Government Schools

Step 10: Revise the current school discipline policy's strategies to manage inappropriate student behaviour

The school discipline policy must outline the strategies that the school uses to manage inappropriate student behaviour and support students experiencing difficulty. These strategies will need to be revised to ensure that they remain effective and consistent with the purpose of the policy.

Focus questions:

- Are the strategies and practices described in the current policy still used?
- Are the strategies and practices described in the current policy still relevant?
- Have new strategies and practices been introduced?
- Taking into account the analysis of school data and staff views, are current strategies and practices clear, practical and effective?
- Are current strategies and practices consistent with Departmental policies and procedures?
- Does the current policy provide additional strategies for students who do not respond to normal disciplinary practices?
- Does the current policy adequately articulate how students with disruptive behaviour are managed?
- Does the current policy reflect Occupational Health and Safety legislation and regulations regarding the management of students with disruptive behaviour?
- What other strategies or practices should the school consider to further manage inappropriate student behaviour?
- Do the strategies and practices support and reflect the 'statement of purpose'?

Suggestions and Resources

Documents:

[Strategies to Manage Inappropriate Student Behaviour – Some Considerations](#)

[Consequences, Rewards and Sanctions](#)

[Level systems](#)

[Time out](#)

Website:

[Legal Issues Bulletins](#)

Step 11: Define the responsibilities of staff, students and parents

The school discipline policy needs to outline the responsibilities of staff, students and parents in relation to student discipline.

These responsibilities should be readily identifiable from the statements made throughout the policy.

Focus questions:

- What is expected of students?
- What is expected of staff? Consider different positions, specialist roles and committees.
- What is expected of parents?

In Conclusion

Ideally, schools will establish a cycle of revision. A list of suggestions and issues should be kept throughout the year to assist the school to refine its discipline policy.

Once the new discipline policy is approved by the principal, copies need to be provided to staff, parents and students.

A copy must be forwarded to the school education director.

A copy of the discipline code (or school rules) must be provided to parents whenever their child is suspended.

It may be useful to place a copy of the school discipline policy on the school internet site.

INCIDENT RESPONSE PLAN

*Managing aggressive or
non compliant students*

What is a serious incident?

A serious incident occurs when any member of staff or students are threatened with physical violence.

Who should this be referred to?

The Deputy Principal & Principal

What should I do?

1. Take all threats seriously (document)
2. Follow the school management plan
3. Decide if local Police need to be called – document time
4. Report the incident to your supervisor (verbal)
5. Complete an incident report (paperwork)
6. Review /evaluate the effectiveness of the response plan

What shouldn't I do?

1. Respond aggressively to or follow the aggressor
2. Leave a class unsupervised
3. Call 000. Contact your local Police Station
4. Leave the school premises without notifying your supervisor
5. Make inappropriate suggestions on how the incident should be managed

PLAN

1. **Move away** from the threat
2. Ensure everyone is **safe**
3. **Seek assistance** from Colleagues
4. **Nominate roles/positions**

Person 1	On site
Person 2	Support person 1 - class
Person 3	Call for assistance
Person 4	Ensure staff is safe
4. **Document** Incident – incident report
5. **Debrief** Incident – where, when who?

Faculty Incident Plan

Situation	Who & What	How
Student is in your class and becomes aggressive or violent	Seek assistance from nearest available colleague Document Debrief & evaluate response	Send student to nearest rooms to seek support School communication system
Student is not in your class, appears at your door in an aggressive /threatening state.	Close your classroom door – restrict access Seek assistance from nearest available colleague Document incident Debrief & evaluate response	Send student to nearest rooms to seek support School communication system
Student is aggressive/threatening/ violent during transitions, you are not the duty teacher.	Instruct student to calm down, move away Monitor until assistance arrives Seek assistance from nearest available colleague Document incident Debrief & evaluate response	Report to faculty Head Teacher
Student is aggressive/threatening or violent whilst you are the duty teacher.	Instruct student to calm down, move away Monitor until assistance arrives Seek assistance from nearest available colleague Document incident Debrief & evaluate response	Report to supervising teacher
Unknown student is aggressive /threatening or violent towards you.	Note students appearance and behaviour in diary Instruct student to calm down, move away Monitor until assistance arrives Identify students who will assist in confirming identity of person/student Seek assistance from nearest available colleague Document incident Debrief & evaluate response	Report to Deputy or Principal

De Escalation – *Calming an irrational student*

- Remove the audience, or move the student if possible
- Use minimal talk – “You’re being unsafe”, “Can I help?”
- Offer space or assistance (drink, walk, and quiet space)
- Allow student to “purge” or vent (*do not take this personally or agree with them*)
- Give them some space, maintain supervision
- Ensure there is nothing lying around that can be broken
- Offer assistance again
- Monitor / supervise
- Debrief incident with student / class – Decide on a plan
- Issues consequences (only when student is rational)
- Follow up

Behaviour Language (Script)

WHEN INSTRUCTING A NON COMPLIANT STUDENT

Initial instruction:

"NAME.... you need to act like a safe, responsible, respectful and active learner in my class"

Initial question:

"NAMEwhat rule are you having difficulty with?"

Secondary Instruction

"NAME..... you need to(refer to school rule/code), otherwise you will need to...see me at lunchtime, complete the work for homework, move seats, etc)

In private, repeat the secondary instruction once more times using a calm, moderated voice, giving eye contact.

Move away from the student and assist other students.

Return to student and ask;

"NAME....What have you decided?"

If a good decision is made say ***"Good decision well done"*** then move away.

If poor behaviour continues say;

"It seems that you have decided to not follow instructions, now you'll need to see me at lunchtime...move seats –Walk away and note consequence issued in your diary.

Restate consequence – use a few words as possible

If poor behaviour continues say;

"You already have to move seats, see me at lunch, etc, now I need to issue a referral slip and you can discuss this with me at lunchtime. Move away from student.



If behaviour is escalating and student is becoming aggressive allow student to use a TIME OUT system. Leave for a few minutes. Give some personal space and check on the other students. Return and offer assistance again. Refer incident to HT / DP.

When student is settled (or has completed consequences) ask:

"What's the problem is there anything I can do to help you. Do you want to talk about solving it or do you still need some time?"

Once settled....Say

"Thanks for settling down so quickly, are you able to return to class and be a part of the class. If you are, then we need to work out how you can do that. Have you got any ideas? Maybe I could suggest something to help you?"

If the student suggests cleaning up or finishing work, agree and supervise. Praise good decisions. Make personal praise as public as possible!

SOME KEY RESOURCES WHEN REDUCING THE RISK OF/MANAGING SERIOUS INCIDENTS¹

Generally

- [NSW DEC Policies and training requiring regular review](#)

Attendance

- [Referral for Home School Liaison Support](#)
- [School Attendance – Legal Action Guidelines](#)
- [School Attendance Policy](#)
- [School Attendance in Government Schools Procedures](#)
- [Supporting Student Attendance Guidelines](#)

Behaviour

- [Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools: Guidelines and related resources](#)
- [Guidelines for Managing Health and Safety Risks Posed by a Student's Violent Behaviour](#)
- [Guidelines for the Use of Time-Out Strategies Including Dedicated Time-Out Rooms](#)
- [Student Discipline](#)
- [Suspension and Expulsion of School Student's Procedures](#)
- [The Use of Mobile Phones, Portable Computer Games, Recording Devices and Cameras in Schools and TAFE](#)
- [Work Health and Safety resources](#)

Child Protection

- [Allegations Against Employees in the Area of Child Protection](#)
- [Collection of Students by FACS Procedures](#)
- [Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Policy](#)
- [Mandatory Reporting Guide](#)
- [Out of Home Care in Government Schools – Education Plan Procedures](#)

¹ This is not a comprehensive list – depending on the nature of the incident or activity other resources may be relevant

Code of Conduct and Complaints

- [Code of Conduct Policy](#)
- [Code of Conduct Procedures](#)
- [Complaints Handling Policy](#)
- [Complaints Handling Guidelines](#)
- [Dealing with Difficult Interviews and Related Issues](#)

Controversial Issues in Schools/ Values in NSW public schools

- [Controversial Issues in Schools](#)
- [Controversial Issues in Schools Policy Implementation Procedures](#)
- [Values in NSW public schools](#)

Court Orders

- [Apprehended Violence Orders](#)
- [Family Law and the School- Guidelines](#)

Disabilities

- [Disability Programs resources](#)

Drugs

- [Drugs in Schools Policy](#)
- [Searching for Illegal Drugs, Knives or Prohibited or Offensive Weapons](#)

Emergency Planning

- [Emergency Planning and Response Policy](#)
- [Emergency Planning Management Guidelines and Support Tools](#)
- [Emergency Planning Overview and Checklist](#)

Enrolment

- [DN/11/00007 – Memorandum to Principals, student support coordinators, district guidance officers and school counsellors – Students applying to enrol in Years 7 to 12 outside of normal enrolment periods](#)
- [Enrolment of Students in NSW Government Schools](#)
- [Enhanced Enrolment Procedures](#)
- [Getting Ready for School – a guide for parents of a child with a disability](#)

Excursions and Extra-Curricula Activities

- [Excursions Policy](#)
- [Excursions Policy Implementation Procedure](#)
- [Welfare of Students While Engaged in Activities Conducted Under the School](#)

First Aid

- [First Aid Policy](#)
- [Injury Management, Health and Wellbeing Management Guidelines and Support Tools](#)

Health

- [Administering Prescribed Medication](#)
- [Student Health Policy](#)
- [Individual Students Who Need Help With Health Issues](#)
- [Student Health Conditions](#)
- [Anaphylaxis](#)
- [Curriculum material – for example – Activity: Getting to Know Anaphylaxis](#)
- [Legal Issues concerning the administration of prescribed medications, health care procedures and medical emergencies in schools and TAFE NSW](#)

Incident Reporting

- [Incident Reporting Policy](#)
- [Incident Reporting Procedures](#)
- [Links Newsletter – Incident Reporting Update](#)
- [DN/10/00225 – Memorandum to Principal - Reporting Incidents Involving Assaults, Threats, Intimidation or Harassment](#)
- [Physical Restraint of School Students](#)

Inclosed Lands Act

- [Unauthorised Entry onto Departmental Premises - Update](#)

Liability of Staff

- [Legal liability of staff in relation to serious incidents which involve potential risk of injury to persons on Departmental premises](#)

Media Relations

- [Media Relations Policy](#)

Privacy

- [Privacy Code of Practice](#)
- [Privacy Bulletins](#)
- [Privacy Checklist](#)

Site Management

- [How to Be a Safe School – Safety and Security Directorate](#)
- [Links Newsletter – Lockdown Procedures for Schools](#)
- [Memorandum of Understanding for Information Exchange Between Schools and Police](#)
- [WHS Resource– NSW schools in bushfire areas, preparing for bushfire season and monitoring bushfire conditions](#)

Social Media

- [Links Newsletter - Social Networking Update](#)
- [Social Media Guidelines](#)
- [Social Media Policy](#)
- [The Use of Mobile Phones, Portable Computer Games, Recording Devices and Cameras in Schools and TAFE](#)
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Sport

- [Guidelines for the Safe Conduct of Sport and Physical Activity in Schools](#)
- [Sport and Physical Activity Safety Policy for Schools](#)

Student Welfare

- [Student Welfare policy](#)

Work Health and Safety

- [OHS Policy](#)
- [OHS Risk Management Policy](#)
- [Fact Sheets – Death at the Workplace and Emergency Health Situations](#)

GUIDELINES FOR MENTORING AND SUPPORTING STUDENTS

**GUIDELINES
FOR
MENTORING
AND
SUPPORTING
STUDENTS**



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Student Welfare Directorate

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Contents

Introduction	3
Tutoring, coaching and mentoring	3
Rationale	3
Mentoring programs	4
Selection of students	4
Parent involvement	4
Community involvement	5
Mentors	5
Selection of mentors	5
Recruiting mentors	6
Supporting and supervising mentors	6
Planning the program	7
Setting up	7
Supervision	8
Child protection	9
Recognising and reporting risk of harm	9
Professional conduct	10
Employment screening	11
Communication issues	12
Establishing a mentoring program step by step	13
Flowchart	13
Process	14

Introduction

Tutoring, coaching and mentoring

There are many ways of assisting students who need extra help to maximise their learning outcomes. One effective way of doing this is for teachers and other adults to work with students one-to-one or in small groups in a tutoring, coaching or mentoring role.

Teachers may provide extra teaching or tutoring before or after school or at lunchtime. Mentors, tutors and coaches can be recruited from school staff or from the community.

These guidelines can assist in the development of effective relationships to maximise learning and ensure the safety of students. They will also assist in clarifying the boundaries of these relationships.

Throughout this document the terms *mentor* or *mentoring* are used to refer to teachers, tutors, coaches and mentors working on a regular, one-to-one or small group basis with students. *Mentoring programs* refer to programs where one or more teachers, tutors, coaches or mentors work on a regular, one-to-one or small group basis with students.

It is important to recognise that the student/mentor relationship may be a powerful influence in a student's life, particularly for those students who are vulnerable for a range of reasons outside the mentoring relationship. Mentoring programs and relationships need to be carefully managed for the safety of all involved.

For this reason, the attention of staff considering taking on the role of mentor, and their supervisors, is specifically directed to the obligations set out in the Department's *Code of Conduct* of June 2004. Section 14 *Duty of care to students* and Sections 28 to 31 inclusive *Relationships Between Staff and Students*, are especially relevant.

Rationale

Resilience research confirms that the presence of a caring adult in their life is important in assisting students to overcome adversity and achieve at school. Effective mentoring seeks to provide such a presence by establishing a trusting relationship between student and mentor that:

- focuses on the needs of the student
- models and fosters caring and supportive relationships to increase
 - self confidence, awareness and management of behaviour
 - positive attitudes towards assisting others
- develops active community partnerships
- recognises that some students may become dependent
- considers other interventions that may be in place.

Mentoring programs

Mentoring is a complex undertaking. Clear guidelines are required to ensure appropriate relationships with clear expectations of the student and mentor. This requires training programs with child protection, duty of care and appropriate relationships between staff and students (see *Code of Conduct 2004*) as important components of this training. The key elements of successful mentoring programs include:

- the approval of the principal
- the support of executive staff and school community
- student agreement to be involved
- informed consent of parents and, if appropriate, their ongoing support
- realistic expectations of what the program can achieve
- regular, formalised meetings with documentation of objectives (agenda) and outcomes (minutes)
- record keeping appropriate to the activity, consistent monitoring and evaluation of the program
- starting with a small, manageable program.

Selection of students

Students must agree to participate in a mentoring program. Mentoring is not a panacea and will have more positive outcomes for some students than others.

Mentoring programs are particularly effective in transition periods. Mentors can:

- teach social skills to Kindergarten students and facilitate their adjustment to school
- help students in Year 2 develop the skills for Stage 2 learning and facilitate the transition from Year 2 to Year 3
- support students' transition from primary to high school
- increase knowledge of education and training opportunities and further education.

Principals and supervisors are reminded that effective management of identified risks will require closer supervision and increased care for younger and less mature students (*Code of Conduct 2004*, page 7).

Parent involvement

Parents must be informed about the purpose of the program, the anticipated outcomes and their children's progress. They must be provided with the opportunity to discuss their children's mentoring program with the supervisor. If possible, parents should meet their child's mentor. Their consent must be obtained before a student is included in the program. Parents also have the right to withdraw their children from mentoring arrangements should they so wish.

Community involvement

Consultation with the broader school community is also essential. It is important that key school community groups, including parent groups are made aware of the rationale for mentoring and informed of how the program will be implemented in the school. Commitment to any program depends on the demonstrated outcomes of the program. Providing the school community with evidence that mentoring produces positive results and responding to concerns they may have about the nature of mentoring will assist in ensuring support for the program.

Mentors

Selection of mentors

Mentors may include community members, teachers or students who have:

- knowledge of relevant child protection issues
- long-term commitment to the program
- respect for alternate views and cultures
- the capacity to focus on the needs of the student
- good listening skills
- the ability to relate positively in a supportive, non-judgemental manner
- knowledge of when to call in specialist assistance
- willingness to allow the student to take responsibility for their decisions
- willingness to do things differently
- the capacity to establish firm boundaries that will assist the student at school.

Community mentors

Community mentors, including parents, add to the number of adults in a school. Knowing that an adult has given up time voluntarily can assist students to feel valued. All adult mentors must sign a *Prohibited Employment Declaration*. At times a *Consent to Screening* form must also be completed (refer to the subsection *Employment screening* on page 11).

Teacher mentors

Teachers, at times, provide individual or small group instruction to students outside of class lessons to meet an immediate learning need. Such instruction may arise informally and is likely to be brief. It should be seen as mentoring, tutoring or coaching, however, when it involves a regular commitment of time.

Entering into a mentoring arrangement requires planning in advance and a careful consideration of the teacher's other commitments. Teachers must remain aware of the differing roles of mentor and teacher and ensure that the two remain separate.

As the learning need of the student or group is met, the teacher will withdraw from the mentoring role. Students' needs determine the appropriateness of this strategy.

Student mentors

Mentoring can strengthen the student leadership program in the school by providing relevant experience and responsibility to students.

Mentoring by students may include peer tutoring, an approach that is particularly valuable for middle school students benefiting both students. This may be set up by the Learning Support Team.

Tripartite mentoring is another student mentoring approach. It involves appointing an older student who has a mentor themselves, acting, in turn, as a mentor to a younger student. This provides a positive opportunity for vulnerable students to practice the skills they have learnt, to receive recognition and develop responsibility.

Recruiting mentors

Mentoring programs require a wide range of volunteers to provide maximum flexibility when matching mentor to student. All appropriate volunteers should be trained so that if a mentor has to drop out of the program, a trained replacement is readily available.

Training must include child protection, duty of care and appropriate relationships between staff and students (see *Code of Conduct 2004*).

Some programs select community members including parents as mentors while others recruit mentors from service clubs or cultural and linguistic diverse (CALD) associations. Advertisements in local papers work for some schools while others recruit from TAFE early childhood or youth worker courses.

Where positions are advertised, advertisements should include appropriate wording on the screening requirements that will apply to recommended applicants. Where employment is arranged by the school and an advertisement has not been placed in the press, applicants must be advised of the requirement to complete a *Prohibited Employment Declaration* and *Consent to Employment Screening* where the person has direct unsupervised contact with children.

If student mentors are to be used they should be asked to apply formally for the position and undergo a semi-formal selection process. This provides them with valuable experience and strengthens their commitment to the program.

Mentors need to be aware of the time commitment and the importance of continuity. An hour per week is usually the minimum requirement to cover one 30 minute session and a debriefing period. Students must be confident that their mentor is reliable and will see them regularly. If this minimum condition cannot be met, student's self-esteem may suffer.

Supporting and supervising mentors

Principals and supervisors are reminded that "Risks associated with the activity being undertaken need to be assessed and addressed before the activity is undertaken" (*Code of Conduct 2004*, page 7).

Debriefing and the provision of feedback to mentors after each session is critical to the success of the mentoring process. All mentors need feedback and support sessions with their designated supervisor to prevent over-involvement with the students and to pre-empt problems. Mentors need to know that the school appreciates their work and that it is providing a benefit to the student.

A trained supervisor is needed to support and monitor the mentoring program. The supervisor must be available to resolve interpersonal problems, manage grievances, and deal with premature closure of the mentoring relationship. They may also need to arrange new mentors if a relationship cannot continue. Feedback sessions may be used to provide resources to ensure the mentoring sessions proceed positively and to provide praise for achievements as appropriate.

The supervisor should be provided with adequate time, within the program budget, to maintain records for the information of the principal and to ensure continuity for new supervisors.

A record should be kept of feedback sessions and must include any issues raised by the mentor and how the issue was dealt with. Any significant issues or feedback in relation to the mentoring arrangement that are raised by members of the school community, including staff and parents, should also be recorded. Records must be stored securely. If issues relate to child protection matters they must be referred immediately to the principal for information and action as required.

Planning the program

Setting up

Before implementing a mentoring program, clear aims must be identified. For each aim there should be a series of concrete, specific, measurable objectives so that progress can be measured at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the program. Both parties should agree on the negotiated plan of action. The stated aims of a mentoring program forms the basis for evaluation. Evaluation should be ongoing so that the program can be fine tuned.

The principal must be informed of, and approve, any mentoring programs or arrangements.

All programs providing students with extra support through mentoring need to be planned so they fit into the normal working patterns of a school. Initial enthusiasm may make mentors wish to see students more frequently but programs are more effective if they are limited to once or twice a week. The time commitment and timeframe needs to be made clear and agreed upon by all parties, including the student, to avoid disappointment. In mentoring arrangements specific goals and a conclusion date need to be set.

Mentors and students need to have a space to meet which is suitable and comfortable. This could be a section in the library, the assembly hall or another space within the school. If a mentor is working one to one with a student it is best if their activities can be seen by others, e.g. through an open door. A study room in the school library or a room off a busy corridor are often appropriate. If mentors are community members, mentoring must take place where they can be observed by a teacher except where specifically approved by the principal.

Supervision

The success of mentoring programs, as for all programs, requires commitment and enthusiasm. The selection and appointment of an appropriate supervisor is essential for the success of the program. The supervisor may have a complementary role within the school such as that of year adviser, head teacher welfare, school counsellor, senior teacher, careers adviser or learning support team co-ordinator. Effective communication, tact, patience and diplomacy, and organisational skills are essential. The appointment of an assistant supervisor is advisable to relieve the work load and provide program continuity.

The supervisor's role includes:

- assessing risks
- ensuring that the duty of care owed to all students is paramount in determining how the program will operate
- ensuring the principal is informed of, and approves the program
- recruiting mentors and ensuring their commitment and retention
- matching of students with mentors
- organising support material for mentoring sessions
- monitoring the relationship between mentor and students
 - resolving unrealistic expectations
 - intervening if the relationship becomes inappropriate
 - reminding mentors and students about appointments
- co-ordinating, monitoring and evaluating the program
- organising and conducting debriefing sessions for mentors (after each session) and students
- record keeping of feedback including any issues raised and how they were dealt with
- providing progress reports to the principal, as required
- referring to the principal, immediately, any issues that relate to child protection
- organising celebratory events to mark key stages of the program.

In addition, the supervisor is responsible for:

- planning meetings with key personnel
- promoting the program to the school community
- finding suitable venues for mentoring sessions.

Child protection

Staff employed by the Department of Education and Training are expected to plan for a safe environment for all student activities. The safety, welfare and well-being of children, young people or students are paramount. *Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People: Revised procedures December 2000* and *Responding to Allegations against Employees in the Area of Child Protection 23 April 2004* provide clear advice for school staff to report child protection concerns directly to the principal.

Community mentors need to be aware of the obligations of schools in protecting students against abuse, misconduct or improper conduct.

Responding to Allegations against Employees in the Area of Child Protection provides information about behaviours which constitute abuse, misconduct or improper conduct. The procedures include “volunteers, for example, parent helpers” in their definition of an employee.

Reporting suspected risk of harm

Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People: Revised procedures December 2000 require that all staff in schools are aware of the indicators of child abuse and neglect of children and young people, their obligations to report suspected risk of harm and the procedure for doing so.

Principals must ensure that community members such as mentors and other volunteers are provided with child protection training to ensure that they are aware of the role of schools in reporting concerns about risk of harm, and their associated responsibilities.

Working with individual students places mentors in a position of trust and authority. Students may talk more freely about personal concerns, including abuse or neglect. Mentors may also be in a position to observe indicators or behaviours that raise concerns about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a student.

If concerns arise, advice must be sought from a supervisor or the principal unless that person is the subject of the concern. Where a staff member has reasonable grounds to suspect risk of harm to a child or young person a report must be made to Department of Community Services (DoCS). In schools these concerns are reported to DoCS by the principal who will take responsibility for any follow up and can co-ordinate support for the student and staff involved. These reports are treated confidentially. In circumstances where a mentor is a member of staff he or she should ensure that a report of risk of harm has been made to DoCS by the principal.

A brochure with general information for community members about recognising and reporting risk of harm to children and young people published by the Department of Community Services is available at:

http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/html/child_protect/how_report.htm

Professional conduct

Effective mentoring relies on positive relationships that are developed in a professional manner. The mentor is, by the nature of their role, in a position of trust, authority and influence. They can have a significant impact upon students' educational progress, social and emotional welfare and behaviour and have the responsibility and authority to manage the situation.

Where teachers provide additional instruction to students in the form of mentoring they should routinely advise their supervisors about the progress of this instruction and the plans for its continuation. This also provides an opportunity for any issues which may arise in the relationship between the teacher and student to be discussed as soon as possible.

Students who are given extra help by a mentor often feel special and welcome the individual adult attention. A student may develop a feeling of attachment to the adult. This situation needs to be handled carefully. If a mentor suspects that a student is developing an attachment, the situation must be discussed with a supervisor and a plan developed to manage it. This may involve another adult sharing or taking over part of the role or providing the extra tuition.

Adults working with primary and secondary school students need to be aware of the possibility that a student may develop a "crush" on them. If this happens, maintaining professional distance becomes extremely important to ensure the welfare of the student is safeguarded, and that the welfare and effectiveness of the mentor are not compromised. Again, the mentor must immediately seek advice from a supervisor.

Any staff member who becomes aware or suspects that a student has developed a crush on the student's mentor, is required to report that crush to either the mentor's supervisor or the principal. In all cases, the supervisor shall report the matter to the principal. This duty to report to the principal forms an element of the Department's role in child protection and reflects its strong commitment to protecting and supporting students. **This is a mandatory duty for all mentoring supervisors.**

Where a principal becomes aware that a student has developed a crush on the student's mentor, the principal should consider informing the student's parents of the situation and confirming the parents' ongoing consent to the mentoring relationship. If a student indicates that he or she does not consent to the principal discussing the issue with the student's parents, then the principal should terminate the mentoring relationship with the current mentor.

Support for the student (e.g. from the year adviser or school counsellor) should be arranged. The attachment must not be encouraged or allowed to continue to develop without appropriate intervention. Advice about maintaining professional relationships with secondary students can be found in *PDHPE: Friend or Foe?* This document may be found on the Department of Education and Training's website at:

http://www.curriculumsupport.nsw.edu.au/PDHPE/files/PDH_friendorfoe.pdf?CFID=2080005&CFTOKEN=31431229

Similarly, a mentor must seek immediate advice from a supervisor should a student develop a 'dislike' for them. In these circumstances, arrangements need to be made, for the reallocation or termination of the mentoring responsibility. This must be done in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of the student.

Mentors must not use physical contact of any kind to achieve a student's compliance with an instruction. They must not strike, push or physically discipline a student. Such actions are contrary to departmental and school policy and can result in disciplinary and/or criminal charges.

Shaking hands is a signal of formal recognition or greeting that is widely expected and accepted across families and cultural groups. Other than this however, there will be little need for physical contact in professional relationships with students. Mentors must be aware that behaviour intended to demonstrate care and concern, including, for example, touching a student on the shoulder or patting a young student on the head, may be inappropriate for some students and may also be misinterpreted, both by the student and by casual observers.

Mentors should also discourage students from touching them. School provides the opportunity for students to learn about appropriate behaviour in more formal relationships than those that occur within families. This learning is valuable as it highlights for students that there are particular ways to communicate with adults other than family or extended family members. This knowledge may, on occasion, protect them from harm.

Advice about the use of touch in physical education or sports can be found in *PDHPE: A Touchy Subject* from the Department's website at:

http://www.curriculumsupport.nsw.edu.au/PDHPE/files/PDH_touchysubject.pdf?CFID=2080005&CFTOKEN=31431229

Employment screening

NSW legislation requires that employment screening be carried out on all people who work with children and young people where the contact is not directly supervised. This ensures that people who may pose a risk to children are not employed in roles where they have direct, unsupervised contact with children.

- Adult mentors must complete a *Prohibited Employment Declaration* stating that they are not a 'prohibited person'.
- Where contact with children is not directly supervised, adult mentors must also complete a *Consent to Screening* form. The Department is an approved screening agency and is able to undertake a Working with Children Check for adults wishing to work with children in schools for no charge. Forms are to be sent to the Employment Screening Unit where screening is carried out. The Unit can be contacted on:
Telephone (02) 9836 9200
Facsimile (02) 9836 9222
E-mail esumail@det.nsw.edu.au.

Guidelines for Principals for the Implementation of the Working with Children Check and Completion of Prohibited Employment Declarations, 24 January 2002 can assist principals in these processes.

Information for community members about employment screening (the Working with Children Check) can be obtained from the website of the Commission for Children and Young People at:

<http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au/check/intro.html>

Communication issues

Planned social interaction out of school hours between students and tutors, school-based coaches or mentors is not appropriate. Where this happens unintentionally in the local community, interactions should be kept positive but brief.

Modes of communication (such as telephone, e-mail) with the student by a mentor must be discussed with and approved by the mentor's supervisor, as well as the student and his/her parent or caregiver. Under no circumstances should any mode of communication be used to communicate inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature, obscene language or gestures, images of a sexual nature, suggestive remarks, jokes or images, or personal correspondence in respect of the employee's feelings (including sexual feelings).

If a student initiates personal contact with a mentor it should be discouraged. This includes contact by e-mail. The mentor should not reply but should inform a supervisor so the issue is noted and a plan is made to resolve it. This may involve sensitively reminding the student about the roles and relationship boundaries of the program in the next mentoring session.

Again it is important to develop communication that keeps professional boundaries clear and that cannot be misinterpreted as a personal as opposed to a professional interest in the student.

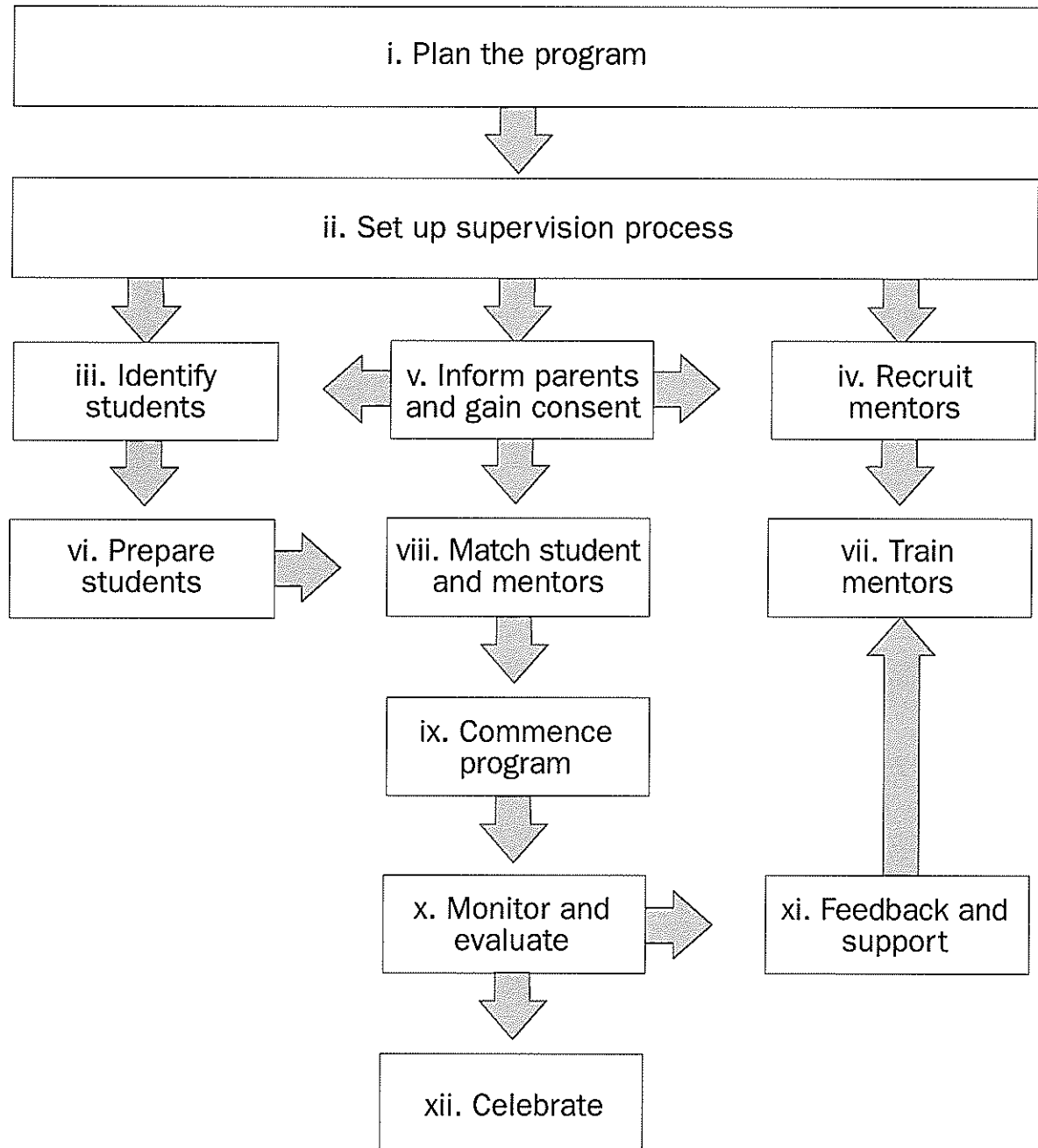
If a mentor is observed, or becomes aware themselves that they are becoming too involved in the student's welfare then reallocation or termination of the relationship should be considered, and the principal informed. In these circumstances, the principal will decide if the relationship should continue and exercise close supervision if it does.

It is important that mentor programs and relationships are carefully managed. If teachers who are relatively inexperienced volunteer for such programs, they will need guidance and support in making professional judgements in these situations.

Mentoring should be a positive experience for all involved. Enjoyment derived from the mentoring relationship per se, however, is not the primary purpose of mentoring. Clear aims and outcomes are required for each session. Insufficient attention to these aims and outcomes may be a sign that the mentor is becoming too involved with the student and intervention by the supervisor is required.



Establishing a mentoring program step by step



Process

i. Plan the program

A formal meeting needs to be set up between all interested parties to establish:

- aims and objectives of the program
- anticipated outcomes
- incorporation of mentoring into the welfare structure of the school
- resources to be allocated to the program
- staff participation
- criteria for selection of students
- evaluation.

ii. Set up the supervision process

The principal:

- assesses risks
- approves the program and nominates a supervisor
- clarifies the responsibilities of the supervisor, including debriefing of mentors and record keeping
- establishes a process for communicating child protection issues, if they arise, to themselves
- determines the nature and frequency of the progress reports he or she requires. (The frequency of these reports will depend on the risk assessment but should be at least once per term.)

iii. Identify students

Start small and build on success by selecting students who are most likely to benefit from a mentoring partnership. Participation in the program must be voluntary.

iv. Recruit mentors

The nature of the target group will determine the mentors recruited and the support required. Establish criteria for selection including cultural, linguistic, social and socio-economic factors and adherence with Departmental employment screening requirements. Inform potential mentors and parents of the aims, objectives, benefits and anticipated outcomes of the program. Ensure that mentors are screened and briefed as to their child protection obligations.

v. Inform parents

Parents must be provided with the opportunity to discuss the program with the co-ordinator. Inform parents of the aims, objectives, benefits and anticipated outcomes of the program.

An information night and/or brochure can help achieve this. Consent must be obtained from parents and they have the right to withdraw their child, should they wish. Parents need to be kept informed about the progress of the program and encouraged to participate where possible.

vi. Prepare students

The aims of the program, benefits to them, their responsibilities and the role of the mentor should be carefully explained.

Students may need to be taught specific skills to enable them to work effectively with their mentor. The basic skills include:

- help seeking skills
- conversation and asking questions
- awareness of obligation to report suspected risk of harm to students
- an understanding of professional standards in relation to staff relationships with students.

vii. Train mentors

Ideally, training for student mentors and community mentors should occur over two days not necessarily consecutive. Teacher mentor training need only take a day. Mentor training should include the following key points. Mentoring is:

- teaching using goal setting strategies
- a partnership to provide guidance and positive perspectives
- a relationship built on trust which requires an understanding of child protection issues and imposes a high level duty of care
- effected over a sustained period of time.

Child protection issues must be included in training. Mentors must also be reminded of the obligations on staff set out in the Department's *Code of Conduct* (June 2004). Section 14 *Duty of care to students* and Sections 28 to 31 inclusive *Relationships between Staff and Students*, are especially relevant.

Mentors must be afforded the opportunity to practise skills in small groups. They should be encouraged to raise questions and discuss issues and concerns throughout the training. Training provides an opportunity for the supervisor to find out if any of the volunteers are not ready to be mentors.

At the conclusion of mentor training, mentors should be provided with a certificate.

viii. Match mentor and student

Criteria may include sex, similar interests, personalities, career choices, cultural or linguistic background or suggestions from teachers and year advisers.

ix. Commence the program

Establishing the aims of the program and the ground rules can provide a focus for the first formal meeting.

A short event hosted by the school can allow a relaxed, non-threatening introduction to the program. Providing mentors and students with opportunities to work in small groups together in the first instance can ease tension.

Mentoring sessions must be based on age-appropriate activities with outcomes defined clearly. Activities that appear patronising are of no benefit. Working jointly on a project, social skills and study skills are particularly suitable for mentoring programs. This defines the length of the program and provides evidence of the success of the relationship.

x. Monitor and evaluate

Monitoring provides information on progress of the program and can be useful to resolve problems or conflicts before they develop. This may be done via surveys, questionnaires, meetings, telephone calls and e-mails. Data should be collected at the start and end of the program and at intervals throughout, from a variety of sources (students, mentors, parents, teachers, program co-ordinator). This includes records kept by the supervisor of feedback from debriefing sessions with mentors and feedback from other members of the school community about particular mentoring arrangements.

Evaluation provides information that can be used to make the program more effective and confirms the value of the program and the effectiveness of the structures in place.

xi. Feedback and support

Discussion and feedback from mentors and students is critical to identify and resolve problems early. Community members, teachers and students may have differing needs.

Teachers need to differentiate their teacher and mentor roles.

Community members may benefit from support in a less formal environment that provides feedback on the positive impact of their involvement.

Students must be assisted to separate from the problems of the student they are mentoring.

Group discussion sessions allow the mentors to bond as a group which maintains their commitment and punctuality.

Feedback from mentors and students assists in the identification of ongoing training and support needs of mentors and can inform training of future mentors.

xii. Celebrate success

The celebration of milestones is essential. Giving mentors and students a certificate is one way to celebrate success. Parents should be included where possible.



Education &
Communities

Public Schools NSW

Compulsory school attendance

Information for nsw government school principals



Schools support parents by monitoring student attendance and helping to address attendance issues when they emerge.

The aim of this brochure is to provide an overview of amendments to the *Education Act 1990* which came into effect in 2010 and outline the intersection with Keep Them Safe.

In New South Wales, 'compulsory school-age' means that all children from six years of age are legally required to be enrolled at and attending school or to be registered for home schooling. After they complete Year 10, and until they turn 17 years of age, students then have the following options. They may also be in:

- full-time further education and training (e.g. TAFE, traineeship, apprenticeship);
- full-time, paid employment of an average of 25 hours per week; or
- a combination of both of the above.

Parents or carers are responsible for making sure that their children comply with these legal requirements. Schools support parents by monitoring student attendance and helping to address attendance issues when they emerge. Where schools have unsuccessfully tried a range of strategies to help resolve a student's non-attendance, schools can request assistance from regional attendance officers of the Department of Education and Communities for additional support.

Keep Them Safe: A shared approach to child wellbeing

The *Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Policy (2010)* sets out the roles and responsibilities of all staff in relation to child protection including training, reporting risk of harm, and supporting children and young people. If the principal or workplace manager suspects a child or young person is at risk of significant harm they must report to the Community Services Child Protection Helpline (telephone 13 3627).

Where a principal or workplace manager suspects a child or young person is at risk of harm which does not meet the threshold of significant harm but is not trivial they must contact the Child Wellbeing Unit (telephone 02 9269 9400 at local call charges).

Where there are concerns that a child or young person is habitually absent, in addition to following the department's policies and procedures for school attendance, all staff should consider whether the habitual absence places the child or young person at suspected risk of harm and where there are concerns that it does, convey these concerns to their principal or workplace manager.

The Mandatory Reporter Guide has been developed to assist staff in making decisions about the nature and seriousness of child protection concerns and what action should be taken in response to these concerns. This guide can be accessed at <http://www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au>.

What are some of the provisions in the Education Act 1990 ("the Act")?

■ Section 22A Obtaining information about children of *compulsory school-age*

(1) Any *relevant institution* or other person may provide information to the Department of Education and Communities solely for the purpose of assisting the *Director-General* to ascertain:

(a) the age, identity or whereabouts of a child who is not receiving *compulsory schooling* or who is not participating in education, training or paid work as an alternative to receiving *compulsory schooling*, and

(b) the reasons why the child is not receiving that *schooling* or not so participating.

Where school based strategies have failed to restore regular school attendance

Principals help to ensure the safety, welfare and wellbeing of students. Where schools have tried a range of strategies to address a student's habitual absence other options are available such as requesting support from the Home School Liaison Program. Prior to 2010, the only legal option available to enforce school attendance was prosecution in the Local Court, resulting in the imposition of a fine and/or a community service order. There is now greater flexibility in proactively dealing with cases of habitual absence. It is hoped that the majority of non-attendance matters will be resolved through a pre-court process such as those set out below. Please note, in reading the information below, one process does not necessarily follow another. Some actions may occur concurrently.

■ *Compulsory schooling undertakings*

The Principal may make schooling arrangements with one or more parents or carers of a child that includes a written 'undertaking' by the parent/s or carer/s with respect to compulsory schooling for the child (a "compulsory schooling undertaking"). The arrangements may be made before, during or after a conference. A compulsory schooling undertaking is admissible in evidence. Undertakings deal with specific issues contributing to the habitual absence. Examples may include that:

- transport will be provided to get the child to school
- an alarm clock will be used and the child will be out of bed at a set time
- the parent will attend drug and alcohol counselling sessions.

Signed undertakings should be kept by the school and a copy provided to the parent or carer.

Where schools have requested support and a case has been accepted onto the caseload of a home school liaison officer and/or an Aboriginal student liaison officer, the following actions are coordinated at a regional level via the Home School Liaison Program.

■ *Compulsory school attendance conference*

The Children's Court or the Director-General of the Department of Education and Communities can direct that a conference takes place, convened by a trained conference convenor, where a child of compulsory school age is not attending school. The aim of a conference is to reach an agreement under which the child will regularly attend school. Conferences involve the school, parents, sometimes students and other people who are likely to be able to help resolve attendance issues, including representatives from other agencies and organisations. The conferencing process also presents an opportunity for other professionals or individuals to identify and provide support for a student and their family to help restore a child's school attendance.

It is important that schools continue to support students and their families during these processes. The school principal or deputy principal should attend the conferences.

■ *Action in the Children's Court*

If other options have not been successful or are not appropriate, it may be necessary to seek intervention of the court. In cases involving older children (aged twelve and above) if it is clearly established that the poor school attendance is not the fault of the parent, an application involving the child, alone, may be commenced. The proceedings in the Children's Court are less formal than prosecutions in the Local Court. This has allowed older children to attend the Court with their parents.

Applications to the Children's Court for a Compulsory Schooling Order will be made by a member of the regional attendance team who, for the purposes of the applying to the Children's Court will be referred to as the "attendance officer". All court appearances will be undertaken by a legal officer, or a local solicitor engaged by the legal officer.

The court may order the parent to attend a conference and/or issue an interim 'Compulsory Schooling Order'. An interim order requires the parent to ensure that the child is enrolled at and attending school. Compulsory Schooling Orders can either be quite general in nature, for

example, an order that a parent engage with relevant Departmental staff, or that they attend a conference. Alternately, orders can also be reasonably involved and comprise numerous components, such as an order to attend drug and alcohol counselling, and/or have a child medically assessed by a particular medical practitioner.

Note: It is anticipated that a significant number of matters will have been subject to a Director-General's conference prior to reaching the Court. However this will not always be the case. In cases where parents have refused to attend a conference, it is anticipated that the Application to the Children's Court will, in addition to seeking a Compulsory Schooling Order, also seek an order that the parent attend a conference.

■ Prosecution in the Local Court

Where parents continue to fail to see that their children are enrolled at and attending school, the matter may be taken to a Local Court. Such measures are in place to ensure that all children of compulsory school age receive the education they deserve. This action can only be taken by, or with the written consent of, the Director-General of the Department of Education and Communities. Legal Services Directorate acts on behalf of government schools.

An action for breach of a Compulsory Schooling Order issued in the Children's Court must be undertaken in the Local Court. Penalties for these offences carry a maximum fine of \$11,000.

Further information regarding school attendance can be obtained from the following websites

Policy, information and brochures:

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/gotoschool/a-z/attendance.php>

New School Leaving Age:

<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/leavingschool/index.php>

Keep Them Safe:

<http://www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au/home>

GUIDELINES FOR EXEMPTION FROM SCHOOL

Frequently Asked Questions

NEW SOUTH WALES
DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION
AND TRAINING



GUIDELINES FOR EXEMPTION FROM SCHOOL

Frequently Asked Questions

General principles

- **Who can grant exemptions?**

Section 25 of the *Education Act* (1990) gives the Minister specific powers related to certificates of exemption to the parents of children of compulsory school age from the requirement that they be enrolled at and attend a government school (or registered non-government school or be registered for and receive home schooling).

In addition, the Director-General is delegated the power to exercise all the Minister's powers under Section 25 without limitation.

The powers related to certificates of exemption to the parents of children of compulsory school age from the requirement that they be enrolled at and attend a government school (or registered non-government school or be registered for and receive home schooling) have been delegated from the Minister, Under Section 25 of the *Education Act* 1990, to the following senior officers within the Department.

Delegates	Powers – Exemption from Attendance at School (Note: Delegates cannot delegate this power)
Director, Student Welfare	Granting of an exemption for any period of time, for students wishing to participate in employment in the entertainment industry or participation in elite sporting events. https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/admiserv/delegate/eda/eda014.htm
Regional Directors	Granting of an exemption from school attendance totalling more than 100 days in a twelve month period for any one student. https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/admiserv/delegate/eda/eda017.htm
School Education Directors	Granting of an exemption from school attendance totalling up to 100 days in a twelve month period for any one student. https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/admiserv/delegate/eda/eda018.htm
Principals	Granting of an exemption from school attendance for periods totalling up to 50 days in a 12 month period for any one student. https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/admiserv/delegate/eda/eda019.htm
	Powers – Exemption from Enrolment at School (Note: Delegates cannot delegate this power)
Deputy Director-General, Schools; General Manager, Access and Equity; Regional Directors	Granting an exemption from school enrolment provided certain conditions are met. https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/admiserv/delegate/eda/eda017.htm

GUIDELINES FOR EXEMPTION FROM SCHOOL

Frequently Asked Questions

Exemption from attendance at school

Granting full day exemptions from attendance at school

- **Family holidays**

When are family holidays considered reasonable grounds for exemption?

Refer to 1.1.2 of *Guidelines for Exemption from School (2009)*. Certificates of Exemption from the compulsory education requirements of the *Education Act 1990* may be granted by a delegated officer when it has been clearly demonstrated by the applicant that an exemption is in the student's best interests in the short and long term and that alternatives to exemption have been considered. For example, in some cases, application for Distance Education may be more appropriate than seeking an exemption from school attendance.

Granting part day exemptions from attendance at school

- **How are part day exemptions counted?**

Refer to 1.3 of *Guidelines for Exemption from School (2009)*. Note that as per Statement 1.3.2, 'Students of compulsory school age who are participating in approved alternative education programs may be granted short term exemptions for periods of time not exceeding the equivalent number of full school days provided for within the delegates' power.

A full school day totals 6 hours.

Principals can grant an exemption from school attendance for periods totalling up to 50 days in a 12 month period for any one student. Principals must keep a record of part day exemptions granted to ensure that the exemptions granted for any one student do not exceed 50 days (full time equivalent).

- **Specified weekly exemptions for an accredited elite sports program**

Can a student be exempted from school during specified times in the week to attend an accredited elite sports program (program is associated with Olympics) or does the principal grant leave?

This would depend on the circumstances of the application. The principal can grant leave totalling not more than 50 days in a 12 month period for any one student. Certificates of Exemption from the compulsory education requirements of the *Education Act 1990* may be granted by a delegated officer when it has been clearly demonstrated by the applicant that an exemption is in the student's best interests in the short and long term and that alternatives to exemption have been considered. {Section 1.1.2 of *Guidelines for Exemption from School (2009)* refers}.

GUIDELINES FOR EXEMPTION FROM SCHOOL

Frequently Asked Questions

- **What constitutes an accredited elite sports program?**

Accredited elite sports programs include national and international sports organisations who run training camps for athletes; national sports squads that students have been selected to participate in; talented identification programs run by the New South Wales Department of Sport and Recreation.

Conditions attached to granting exemptions from attendance at school

- Is there a minimum number of days for which students can be exempted?

No, provided the principles in the *Guidelines from Exemption at School (2009)* are adhered to.

- Can an exemption from attendance at school be cancelled?

Yes, if the conditions attached to the exemption are not met, the certificate is no longer valid. In other matters, where the Certificate of Exemption needs to be cancelled, the matter should be referred to the Manager, Student Behaviour and Attendance, Student Welfare Directorate for action.

Exemption from enrolment at school

Granting exemptions from enrolment at school

- **Child turning six prior to October in a school year**

If a child is turning six prior to October in a school year and the parents request an exemption from enrolment at school, can this be granted?

Generally, the answer is no, however there may be some circumstances where this would be considered. In deciding whether this is appropriate, the following key principles should be considered.

The *Education Act 1990* requires parents to enrol their children at school (or register them with the Office of the Board of Studies for home schooling) by their sixth birthday.

Ideally, students will be enrolled at the commencement of the year in which they turn six in order to gain the maximum benefits of school. However, there is no legal requirement to do so until their sixth birthday.

Students who do not turn six in a current school year could be enrolled at school up until the conclusion of term two. Many government schools accept Kindergarten enrolments from Term two in preparation for the start of the school year in the following year. Such enrolments do not take effect until the students' first day of attendance in the new school year.

GUIDELINES FOR EXEMPTION FROM SCHOOL

Frequently Asked Questions

The conditions under which an exemption may be granted are outlined in Section 2.2.1 of the *Guidelines for Exemption from School (2009)*. Regional Directors may grant such exemptions due to:

- age, where a child turns six years in October or later in a school year and is engaged in full time preschool education at an accredited preschool for the remainder of the school year
- participation in full or part-time accredited preschool programs for students with disabilities leading to enrolment and full time attendance at a government or registered non-government school not later than six months after the child's sixth birthday
- the health or disability of a child necessitating the continuation of an individual program supported by medical specialists not longer than six months after the child's sixth birthday.

Note: Where children are expected to enrol in Kindergarten following the period of exemption from enrolment, they may be involved in a transition-to-school program as a condition of their exemption.

Conditions attached to granting exemptions from enrolment at school

- Can an exemption from enrolment at school be cancelled?

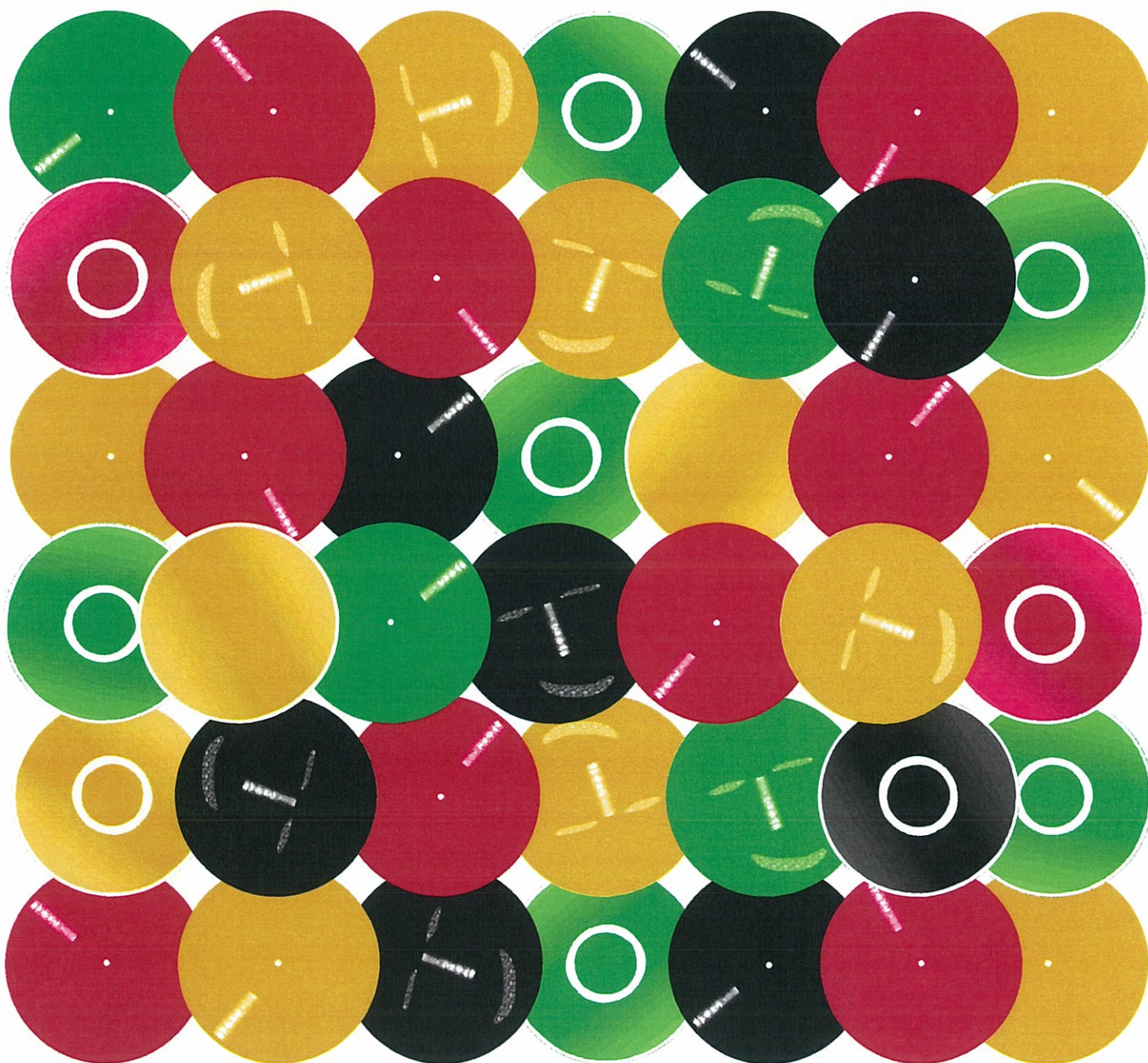
Yes, if the conditions attached to the exemption are not met, the certificate is no longer valid. In other matters, where the Certificate of Exemption needs to be cancelled, the matter should be referred to the Manager, Student Behaviour and Attendance, Student Welfare Directorate for action.



Education &
Communities

Bullying

Preventing and responding to student bullying in schools guidelines



Contents

Introduction	3
Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy	4
A process for the development or review of the school's Anti-bullying Plan	5
Step 1 Form a school team	5
Step 2 Develop a shared understanding of bullying behaviour that captures all forms of bullying including cyber bullying	5
a. build field knowledge	6
b. gather and analyse information	6
Step 3 Engage the school community	7
Step 4 Develop a 'Statement of Purpose'	7
Step 5 Develop or revise the school anti-bullying plan and protection, prevention, early intervention and response strategies	8
Step 6 Promotion and publication of the plan within the school community	8
Step 7 Review	9
Appendices	
Planning Document	
Anti-bullying Plan for Schools Template	
Anti-bullying Plan Framework – A Check List for Schools	
Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Guidelines	



Guidelines for developing the school anti-bullying plan – introduction

These guidelines and associated support materials will assist schools to build on their current practice and revise their Anti-bullying Plans to comply with the new 2011 *Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying Policy*. They provide a framework for schools to use in developing and implementing an Anti-bullying Plan which includes protection, prevention, early intervention and response strategies for student bullying. The Anti-bullying Plan is a key part of every school's planning for student wellbeing and effective learning.

The New South Wales Department of Education and Communities takes the issue of bullying very seriously. All students have the right to expect that they will spend the school day free from the fear of bullying, harassment and anti-social behaviour in a secure, ordered and supportive environment.

As schools evaluate their current school anti-bullying plans, they should consider other state wide reforms and changes in their own practices and circumstances.

At a school level, the anti-bullying plan will need to reflect or respond to emerging issues in student behaviour such as cyberbullying and to current understandings about good practice in managing student behaviour.

The Anti-bullying Plan must be reviewed with the school community at least every three years. The Plan should reflect the current teaching and learning practices at the school. The review will provide opportunities for reflection and renewal.

While schools are expected to revise their Anti-bullying Plan to comply with the *Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying Policy* the process outlined in these guidelines and support materials is optional.

Along with a suggested process for looking at the Anti-bullying Plan and practice, these support materials also contain hyperlinks to useful resources. Clicking on the hyperlinks will guide you to a website or allow you to download documents.

There is a range of regional support staff, including Student Welfare Consultants, available to assist school communities with reviewing their Anti-bullying Plan.

For further information, please contact the Leader, Student Behaviour and Anti-bullying Initiatives, Student Welfare Directorate, on 9244 5514.

Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy

The Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy sets out the requirements for preventing and responding to student bullying in NSW Government Schools.

The Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy supports a prevention and early intervention approach in relation to student bullying and recognises that the best outcomes are achieved by school communities working together to help prevent bullying from occurring, acting early to stop any bullying from getting worse and responding in a timely and appropriate way to bullying incidents if they occur.

The policy requires schools to develop protection, prevention, early intervention and response strategies for student bullying.



Protection refers to those factors that increase the likelihood of positive well being outcomes and buffer against the effects of negative experiences. In schools, a positive school culture that fosters student connection with both the school and the wider community will support the development of protective factors that include relationships, knowledge and skills. Strategies include:

- developing a shared understanding of bullying behaviour that captures all forms of bullying including cyberbullying
- developing a statement of purpose that outlines individual and shared responsibilities of students, parents, caregivers and teachers for preventing and responding to bullying behaviour
- maintaining a positive climate of respectful relationships where bullying is less likely to occur.

Prevention builds on the protective factors and refers to strategies specifically designed to prevent bullying behaviour such as:

- developing and implementing programs for bullying prevention
- embedding anti-bullying messages into each curriculum area and in every year.

Early Intervention refers to providing support before an issue emerges or escalates such as:

- developing and implementing early intervention support for students who are identified by the school as being at risk of developing long-term difficulties with social relationships

- developing and implementing early intervention support for those students who are identified at or after enrolment as having experienced bullying or engaged in bullying behaviour.

Response refers both to the actions of the school when an incident occurs and to the informed development of future protection, prevention, early intervention and response strategies, such as:

- empowering the whole school community to recognise and respond appropriately to bullying, harassment and victimisation and behave as responsible bystanders
- developing and publicising clear procedures for reporting incidents of bullying to the school
- responding to incidents of bullying that have been reported to the school quickly and effectively
- matching a planned combination of interventions to the particular incident of bullying
- providing support to any student who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour
- providing regular updates, within the bounds of privacy legislation, to parents or caregivers about the management of the incidents
- identifying patterns of bullying behaviour and responding to such patterns
- monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the Plan
- reporting annually to the school community on the effectiveness of the Plan.

A process for the development or review of the school's Anti-bullying Plan.

Step 1: Form a school team

The role of the school team is to facilitate the development and revision process. The team should be led by the principal or their nominee and should be representative of the whole school community. The principal remains responsible for the final decisions relating to the school Anti-bullying Plan. It is important to have representatives from across the schools, including teachers, executive, students and parents, as well as other community members.

It is also important to ensure representation for those students who have special needs or who are at risk due to their cultural, ethnic or socioeconomic background.

Focus questions:

- Who are the key stakeholders in our school community?
- How will you ensure representation from the whole school community?
- What representation is appropriate for each stakeholder?
- What expertise is required to assist the team to successfully complete its task?
- How should the team members be selected?

Groups to consider include:

- Students (a cross representation)
- Staff (including specialist staff and support staff and members of other committees)
- Parents and caregivers

- Community members (eg consider staff from other government departments and community organisations that work with the school, and the cultural groups that make up the school community)

School Self-Evaluation Tool Kit

https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/directorates/schoimpro/sda/Self_evaluation_toolkit.pdf

This toolkit will give your school team more information about effective school self-evaluation processes. This information will support your school team with the process of developing or reviewing your school's Anti-bullying Plan.

Step 2: Develop a shared understanding of bullying behaviour that captures all forms of bullying including cyberbullying.

A comprehensive strategy to prevent bullying in schools and increase the wellbeing of our communities requires open and agreed understandings of bullying. Talking about bullying issues and developing shared understandings motivates school communities to take action.

Developing a critical understanding of the role of power, culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and physical ability in bullying by engaging in wide ranging discussions allows schools communities to deal with the underlying issues. When undertaken reflectively and collaboratively, this process can build the trust and respect needed for individuals and groups to safely challenge and change inequalities within the school. The school can then be better placed to address the needs of all students and foster an inclusive school culture.

Development of a working group with diverse representation from the school community can facilitate a shared understanding of what bullying is. The school, through the working group, can make a commitment to understanding the types of social dynamics involved within the local community, the role of power and the deeper social factors that support such behaviours. This will form a basis for a clear vision for action to create a

safer and more supportive school environment.

With encouragement and support, schools can re-examine their current school ethos by taking a broader look at their existing policies, programs and curriculum. Students, teachers, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community have a shared responsibility to create a safe and happy environment, free from all forms of bullying.

To succeed in creating a shared understanding it may be helpful to:

Build knowledge and understanding

- Explore what bullying is.
Engage your school community in discussions to explore the implications for this definition.

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Cyberbullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.

Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, homosexuality or transgender. Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved including bystanders.

Conflict or fights between equals or single incidents are not defined as bullying.

- Research Australian and international information on bullying including cyberbullying.

Bullying. No Way! www.bullyingnoway.com.au

Gather and analyse information

Conduct an audit of your school's needs and current provisions and evaluate your existing anti-bullying strategies. This will allow your school teams to more clearly identify current strategies that should be retained, those that need modification, and the areas that will require the development of new strategies.

The team should collect and evaluate copies of the following documents:

- The *Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying Policy*
- Student discipline in government schools
- Core rules in NSW government schools
- Values in NSW public schools
- Anti-Racism policy
- The school attendance policy
- Suspension and expulsion of school students – procedures
- Student welfare policy
- Occupational health and safety legislation and regulations.

School data that should also be considered may include:

- Incident reports, complaints and discipline referrals involving bullying of any type

- Parent complaints about student bullying
- Reports of playground bullying incidents – nature, location and number
- Referrals to the school Learning Support Team for students who are identified as being at risk of developing long-term difficulties with social relationships or have experienced bullying or engaged in bullying behaviour
- Reports of attendance issues that are linked to bullying behaviour.

Focus questions:

- Are all aspects of the current school Anti-bullying Plan consistent with the *Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying Policy*?
- Are all aspects of the current school Anti-bullying Plan consistent with relevant Departmental policies and plans?
- Are all relevant mandatory Departmental policies reflected in the current school Anti-bullying Plan?
- Which student welfare, student learning, attitudinal or school community trend data has significance and should be considered?



Step 3: Engage the school community

School communities need to work together to recognise, challenge and change inequalities that fuel bullying and harassment within the school – and to build trust and respect between all groups. By doing this, we are better placed to meet the needs of all students and contribute to a socially just environment.

The school team should undertake ongoing and wide consultation with the school community. The commitment of a critical mass of the school community will contribute to the effectiveness of bullying protection, prevention, early intervention and response strategies. Schools have found that inclusive involvement of the school community often leads to a negotiated viewpoint and greater compliance and effectiveness. Participation of the school community can support consistency and positive reinforcement.

The team should present the information it has gathered and the plan it is developing to the school community for consideration at various stages throughout the process.

Focus questions:

- How will you achieve a whole school approach that engages all sectors of the school community?

- At what stages throughout the process will the school community be consulted?
- To which members of the school community should the various information be presented? Consider sensitivity and privacy issues related to some data).
- How can this information be effectively presented so its significance can most readily be recognised?
- What questions should be asked to facilitate understanding and generate ideas? (Especially important for developing shared understanding of some issues including protection and prevention, cyber bullying, power relationships, bystander issues and response to bullying issues).
- How will perceived concerns be addressed?

Step 4: Develop a 'Statement of Purpose'

A 'statement of purpose' should be included at the beginning of the Anti-bullying Plan. This statement outlines the aims of the school and the key beliefs or principles upon which the plan is based.

Preventing and responding to bullying behaviour in learning environments is a shared responsibility of all departmental staff, students, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community. All members of the school community contribute to the preventing bullying by modelling and promoting appropriate behaviour and respectful relationships.

The Bullying: Preventing and Responding to School Bullying in Schools Policy outlines responsibilities of school staff, students, parents and caregivers and the whole school community. Engaging the school community in discussions about what role the school may have in supporting each member of the school community to help them to fulfil the responsibilities outlined in the policy may help clarify the key beliefs and principles on which the statement of purpose will be based.

Focus questions:

- What principles should underpin the school's anti-bullying practices?
- What outcomes does the community want the school Anti-bullying Plan to achieve?

- How do the responsibilities of the staff, students, parents and caregivers and the whole school community in the *Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy* help the school to clarify the outcomes the school is aiming to achieve?
- Do all the policies, programs and practices within the school work together to achieve these outcomes?

Step 5: Develop or revise the school Anti-bullying Plan to include protection, prevention, early intervention and response strategies for student bullying

Identify the series of strategies that will comprise your new or revised Anti-bullying Plan. Write up a plan to reflect the strategies that the team has identified. Your plan should be in a format that clearly identifies, for example, your expected outcomes, targets, strategies and timeframe. This (planning document) is an example of a type of planning format that may be useful.

Expand the fine detail of each strategy in your plan. Discuss the plan and each of the individual strategies with those people who will be involved in its implementation. This will help everyone to have a clear understanding of what has to be done, when it needs to be done and the roles they will play.

Focus questions:

- Do the strategies support and reflect the aims and beliefs articulated in the 'statement of purpose'?
- Are there strategies for each of the areas for action required by the *Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy*?
- Does the plan include process to evaluate and review each strategy as well as the plan as a whole?

Step 6: Publication and promotion of the Plan within the school community

Your school may find this template (Anti-bullying Plan Template) useful for publishing your school's Anti-bullying Plan to your school community. You can describe the strategies your school has planned to implement in a document that is reader friendly and easily published and made available on any school website.

- How will you publish and promote the new Plan within the school community?
- Into which community languages does the school's Anti-bullying Plan need to be translated?

Website:

Interpreter and Translation Services
<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/adminsupport/intertranslate.php>

Step 7: Review

Use this process to review your plan at least every three years. Whenever your plan is reviewed:

- forward a copy to your School Education Director
- provide copies to students and parents
- publish and promote the new plan
- place on any school website.

Useful websites:

Bullying No Way!

www.bullyingnoway.com.au

Mindmatters

<http://www.mindmatters.edu.au/default.asp>

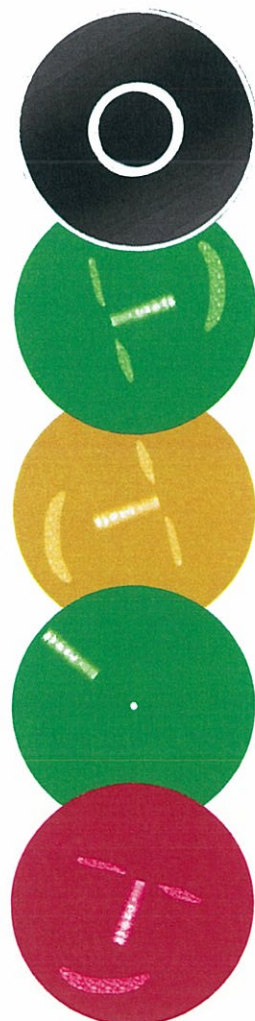
Kidsmatter

<http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/>

National Coalition Against Bullying

www.ncab.org.au

Refer to the Support Materials Checklist for further information about useful resources and websites.



GPO Box 33
Sydney NSW 2001
Australia
T 9561 8000
www.det.nsw.edu.au

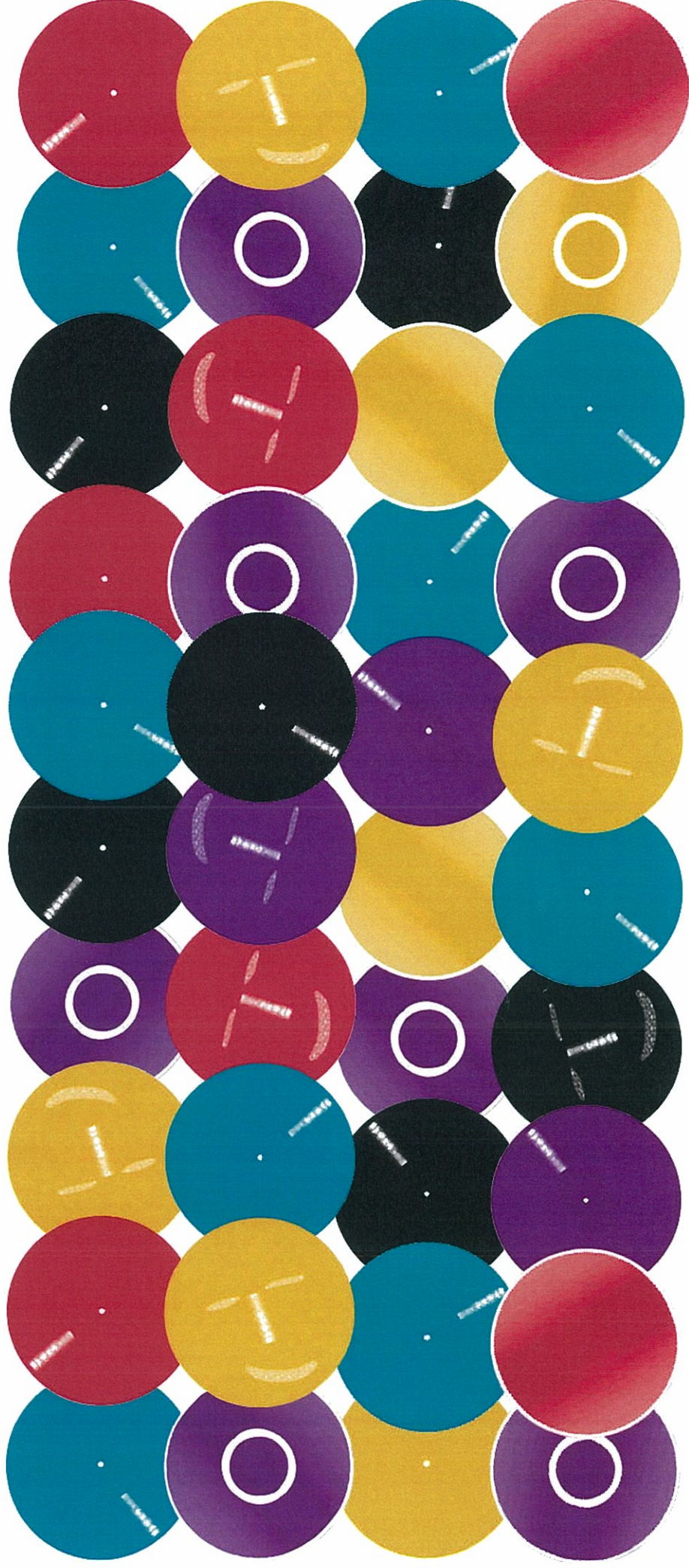
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NSW Department of Education & Communities



Education &
Communities

Anti-bullying Plan

School Name





Bullying:

Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy (2011)

The NSW Department of Education and Communities rejects all forms of bullying. No student, employee, parent, caregiver or community member should experience bullying within the learning or working environments of the Department.

Bullying

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Cyber bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies.

Bullying can involve humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation and all forms of harassment including that based on sex, race, disability, homosexuality or transgender. Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long term effects on those involved including bystanders.

Conflict or fights between equals or single incidents are not defined as bullying.

Bullying behaviour can be:

- **verbal** eg name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults, threats
- **physical** eg hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting
- **social** eg ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating, making inappropriate gestures
- **psychological** eg spreading rumours, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious SMS and email messages, inappropriate use of camera phones.

The term "bullying" has a specific meaning.

The school's Anti-bullying Plan sets out **the processes for preventing and responding to student bullying**. The school has a range of policies and practices, including welfare and discipline policies that apply to student behaviour generally.

Schools exist in a society where incidents of bullying behaviour may occur. Preventing and responding to bullying behaviour in learning and working environments is a shared responsibility of all departmental staff, students, parents, caregivers and members of the wider school community.

School staff have a responsibility to:

- respect and support students
- model and promote appropriate behaviour
- have knowledge of school and departmental policies relating to bullying behaviour
- respond in a timely manner to incidents of bullying according to the school's Anti-bullying Plan.

In addition, teachers have a responsibility to:

- provide curriculum and pedagogy that supports students to develop an understanding of bullying and its impact on individuals and the broader community.

Students have a responsibility to:

- behave appropriately, respecting individual differences and diversity
- behave as responsible digital citizens
- follow the school Anti-bullying Plan
- behave as responsible bystanders
- report incidents of bullying according to their school Anti-bullying Plan.

Parents and caregivers have a responsibility to:

- support their children to become responsible citizens and to develop responsible online behaviour
- be aware of the school Anti-bullying Plan and assist their children in understanding bullying behaviour
- support their children in developing positive responses to incidents of bullying consistent with the school Anti-bullying Plan
- report incidents of school related bullying behaviour to the school
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

All members of the school community have a responsibility to:

- model and promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the school community
- support the school's Anti-bullying Plan through words and actions
- work collaboratively with the school to resolve incidents of bullying when they occur.

Our School Anti-Bullying Plan

This plan outlines the processes for preventing and responding to student bullying in our school and reflects the *Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy* of the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities.

Explain how representation from the whole school community has been ensured. Explain how and at what stages you have/you will engage the school community in developing, implementing, evaluating and reviewing this plan.

Statement of purpose

Enter a statement of purpose that outlines the key beliefs or principles about bullying behaviour and the aims of the school on which this Anti-bullying Plan is based.

Protection

Explain the understandings the school has reached about bullying behaviour that captures all forms of bullying including cyberbullying.

Explain what is considered by the school community to be bullying behaviour, how that behaviour is viewed by the school and what the school will do about it.

Explain the understandings the school has developed about the individual and shared responsibilities of students, parents, caregivers and teachers in preventing and responding to bullying behaviour.

Detail the strategies the school will implement to maintain a positive climate of respectful relationships where bullying is less likely to occur.

Prevention

Detail the strategies and programs the school will implement for bullying prevention.

Detail how the school is embedding anti-bullying messages into each curriculum area and in every year level.

Early Intervention

Detail the early intervention strategies and programs your school will implement for students who are identified as being at risk of developing long-term difficulties with social relationships and those students who are identified at or after enrolment as having previously experienced bullying or engaged in bullying behaviour.

Response

Detail the strategies your school will implement to empower the whole school community to recognise and respond appropriately to bullying, harassment and victimisation and behave as responsible bystanders.

Detail the procedures for reporting incidents of bullying at your school. Detail how these procedures will be publicised to your school community.

Detail the procedures and timeframes that your school will implement when an incident of bullying is reported to the school.

Detail the processes that will be used at your school to match planned combinations of interventions to the particular incident of bullying.

Detail the strategies and programs your school will implement to support any student who has been affected by, engaged in or witnessed bullying behaviour.

Explain the school's plans for providing regular updates, within the bounds of privacy legislation, to parents and caregivers about the management of bullying incidents that have been reported to the school.

Explain the school's procedures for reporting incidents involving assaults, threats, intimidation or harassment to the police.

Explain the procedures the school will use with regard to contacting the Child Wellbeing Unit or Community Services where appropriate.

Explain departmental appeal procedures and provide information about the Complaints Handling Policy.

Detail the strategies the school will use to identify patterns of bullying behaviour. Explain how the school will respond to such patterns.

Detail how your school will promote and publicise this Anti-bullying Plan including how it will be made widely available to the school community available on any school website.

Detail the processes your school will use to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its Anti-bullying Plan.

Explain how your school will report annually to the school community on the effectiveness of the Anti-bullying Plan.

Explain how and when (at least every three years) your school will review this Anti-bullying Plan with the school community.

Additional Information

Enter here contact information for the Police Youth Liaison Officer (YLO) and the School Liaison Police officer (SLP) where appropriate.

Enter here contact information for appropriate support services such as Kids Helpline

Web: Enter here

Enter any additional text here

Principal's comment

Enter a comment from the principal as the leader of the school team that developed the plan.

Enter the names and positions of each member of the school team that developed the plan.

Enter team member and position

Enter team member and position

Enter team member and position

Enter team member and position

Enter team member and position

School contact information

Enter School name

Enter School address

Ph: Enter here

Fax: Enter here

Email: Enter here